

REMARKS

This Amendment, submitted in response to the Office Action dated December 26, 2007, is believed to be fully responsive to each point of rejection raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-31 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-3, 7, 10, 11, 16 and 17 stand rejected. Claims 4-6, 8, 9, 13-15 and 18-31 have been withdrawn from consideration. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 2, 11, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. The Applicant has amended claims 2, 11 and 16 to improve their clarity. The rejection of claim 17 should be overcome by the amendment of claim 16 containing a directional indicator. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 7, 10, 11, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Katoh et al. (U.S. 6,652,044, hereafter “Katoh”). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Independent claim 1 recites in part:

“... wherein two connecting members are fitted onto each of the left-hand side and right-hand side wing portions of each core metal in the longitudinal direction of the rubber elastomer, such that the adjacent core metals are sequentially connected with each other.” (emphasis added).

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's contention that the C-frame ring 38 functions as another connecting member. The C-frame ring 38 is provided at each bar 4 to connect the bar to the band 25. *See* col. 18, ln. 21-29. Each C-frame ring 38 is itself connected to only one bar, therefore the C-frame ring 38 cannot possibly be a connecting member. *See* FIG. 83. Accordingly, there is no disclosure of two connecting members on each of the side wing portions, as required by claim 1. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable over Katoh. Dependent claims 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 16 and 17 are believed to be allowable at least by virtue of their dependency.

Further, with respect to dependent claim 7, as stated above, C-frame ring 38 does not have two ends, and thus cannot possibly satisfy claim 7.

Further, with respect to dependent claim 10, Katoh does not disclose staggering of connecting members. Examiner is requested to specify where the limitations of claim 10 are allegedly disclosed.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any

overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

/SMG/

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Date: June 26, 2008